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FORMOSAN NATIONALISM

JOHN H. THOMAS

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FORMOSAN NATIONALISM

An Essay

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School of Public Affairs

University of Washington

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Public Administration

by

John H. Thomas  
Commander U. S. Navy

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations decision to seat the Peoples Republic of China, coupled with the departure of the Chinese Nationalist Government from that world organization, has increased the hopes and prospects of the Formosan nationalism movement for an independent Taiwan. During the decade of the 1970's, barring unforeseen international events, it appears the present Nationalist government will have to reach an accommodation with either the Communist government on the mainland or the native Formosan people on Taiwan.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this study is to examine the historic, legal and present prospects of a Formosan nationalism or independence movement, and to attempt to determine the impact of this movement on the future status of Taiwan. The information and data have been obtained from recognized Formosan scholars as well as personal impressions gained between 1966-1970 while serving in the Far East and dealing directly with members of the Government of the Republic of China and the Formosan community.

Throughout this study the term "Republic of China" is used to refer to the present Chiang Kai-shek government, while "Formosa" and "Taiwan" refer to the island itself, including the Pescadores, Quemoy, and the Matsu Island groups in the Straits of Formosa.

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<sup>1</sup>Mark A. Plummer, "Taiwan's Chinese Nationalist Government," *Current History*, LXI (September, 1971), 176.



## HISTORIC BACKGROUND (1500-1945)

The physical aspect of Formosa presents a subtropical island about 240 miles long and 85 miles across at its widest point, with an area of 14,000 square miles, approximately one-half the size of Massachusetts. It lies 120 miles off the coast of southeastern China's Fukien province. The island's population of 14.5 million is larger than that of most countries now represented in the United Nations; it is larger than that of Australia, Sweden, Chile, and almost double that of Greece. Of this figure, over 12 million inhabitants are native to Formosa, and 2 million are post-1945 Nationalist settlers from the Chinese mainland.

While it is uncertain when and whence the first inhabitants came to Formosa, it is known that the Chinese began to migrate there in substantial numbers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries,<sup>2</sup> with extensive movement across the Taiwan Straits in the mid-seventeenth century during the Ch'ing (Manchu) dynasty. Emigrants then were principally Fukienese and Hakkas (the latter mostly from Kwangtung province).<sup>3</sup> In 1662, the son of a famous Ming pirate known as Koxinga (Cheng Ch'eng-Kung) led a refugee band across the Formosa Straits, expelling Dutch traders and making Formosa

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<sup>2</sup>Lung-chu Chen and Harold D. Lasswell, *Formosa, China, and the United Nations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>Gail S. Bradley and Douglas P. Murray, "Introduction," in Jerome A. Cohen, *Taiwan and American Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 14.





his personal kingdom. This is significant in that many Formosans consider Koxinga the creator of the first independent state on Formosa and refer to his regime as "the first and only time the island was independent of foreign control . . . ." <sup>4</sup> In 1683 the descendents of Koxinga were finally forced to surrender to the Manchu forces and in July, 1683 Formosa was absorbed into the Chinese Empire.

From 1683 until the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the native Formosans were under the weak control of the Manchu dynasty from the mainland capital of Peking. Western observers on Formosa before 1895 reported that laws and security measures were neither enforced by the Manchus nor accepted by the natives. The Chinese administrators found it dangerous to venture beyond the island's few garrison towns. <sup>5</sup> The popular opposition to the Manchus was particularly intense in Formosa and resulted in large-scale rebellions in 1721, 1787, and 1870. Whether the many revolts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries signified a growing native identity is doubtful. Most writers seem to think they were a negative resistance to external rule rather than a sign of positive Formosan nationalism. <sup>6</sup>

On March 26, 1895, in the course of the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese captured the Pescadores Islands after brief resistance from the

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas Mendel, *The Politics of Formosan Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Meisner, "The Development of Formosan Nationalism," in Mark Mancall, ed., *Formosa Today* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 148.



Chinese. Following a three-week armistice, a peace treaty was signed at Shimonoseki, providing for the cession to Japan of Formosa. Shortly after the occupation, there were recurrences of Formosan "banditry" and sporadic uprisings, some of which were ruthlessly suppressed by the Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

When Formosa was taken over by the Japanese government in 1895, it could be described as a "traditional society." Within a few years after assuming control, Japan made this society the subject of a vigorous developmental policy aimed at transforming the island into a productive agricultural colony. However, it was first necessary to establish civil order, build additional communications, and to organize monetary, marketing and other basic economic institutions. Japan set about these tasks on a priority basis, and its colonial administrators carried them out efficiently on an accurate time schedule. While the motive was definitely self-interest, Japan's policies were enlightened. Japan sought to demonstrate it was a civilizing force in Asia.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1920's, Japan strove to build hydro-electric plants in the Formosan mountains and an irrigation system for the southeastern plains. In addition, by the early 1940's over 90 per cent of the Formosan children were enrolled in a six-year free and compulsory school, with about 70 per cent of the people literate in Japanese as well as their own language.<sup>9</sup> Most Formosan

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph W. Ballantine, *Formosa* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1952), p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Neil H. Jacoby, *U. S. Aid to Taiwan* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



industries reached prewar peaks of output in 1938 or 1939, after which a number of forces combined to bring about sharp declines. More and more of the island's economic resources were mobilized to support the Japanese war effort and with the mounting of the U. S. offensive in the Pacific, Taiwan was the target of increased Allied bombing attacks.<sup>10</sup>

Most writers in this field seem to agree that the Japanese regime naturally did its best to suppress, subvert, or disrupt any Formosan nationalism movement, and political freedom under their rule did not keep pace with economic, public health and educational developments. However, Formosans appear to have realized that the half-century of Japanese rule had prepared the ground for a genuine sense of national unity. It had provided the first effective island-wide administration, instituted modern education, cut off most ties with mainland China, and increased the growth of urbanization. This growth, along with the rise of an articulate middle class, helped weld the Formosan population together at the same time the irritant of the Japanese presence further united it.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup>Mendel, p. 25.



# LEGAL ASPECTS OF FORMOSA

A study of Formosan nationalism would be incomplete without examining the views and claims concerning the present legal status of Formosa since World War II. Since nearly all the conferences and decisions affecting this status took place during the time frame I have now reached in this chronology of Formosan nationalism, I would like to stop here and examine in detail some of these legal aspects.

The basis of the post-war status of Formosa was determined by the Cairo Declaration of December, 1943, wherein President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and President Chiang Kai-shek agreed that, "All territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China."<sup>12</sup>

The Cairo Declaration was the first joint declaration by the United States, Great Britain, and China in respect to the future status of Formosa. With the exception of Russia, the Allied Powers had agreed to restore the island to the Republic of China. That a commitment was made to China by her Allies is unquestioned. However, the legal binding effects of the Cairo Declaration has become a subject of controversy among the Allied Powers in recent years.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Chen, p. 129.

<sup>13</sup>Frank P. Morello, *The International Legal Status of Formosa* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nyhoff, 1966), p. 16.





Because Russia was not at war with Japan at the time of the Cairo Conference, Marshal Stalin did not participate in its first phase. As a result, Russia was not a signatory to the Declaration of 1943. However, during a discussion with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at the time of the Teheran Conference, Marshal Stalin concurred with the substance of the Cairo Declaration.<sup>14</sup> While wishing to maintain an atmosphere of cooperation with its allies, and agreeing in principle to the substance of the Cairo Declaration, Russia was not bound to the Declaration since it was not a signatory to that pact.

As a result of the American Government's efforts to obtain Soviet acceptance of the Cairo Declaration, its terms were reiterated in the Potsdam Proclamation. The Proclamation, issued on July 26, 1945, and approved by the Heads of Government of the United States, China and Great Britain, called for the surrender of Japan. Paragraph (8) of the Proclamation specified that: "The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out."<sup>15</sup>

Contrary to American expectations the Soviet Government did not become a signatory to the Potsdam Proclamation. In justifying his actions, Stalin claimed that Russia was still at peace with Japan. Furthermore, the Soviet leader was reluctant to commit himself until the Allies agreed to his demands and until Russia had settled its problems with China. However, when

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<sup>14</sup>United States Department of State, "The Conference at Cairo and Teheran," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961, pp. 565-568.

<sup>15</sup>United States Department of State, "The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1960, p. 927.



the Allied victory over Japan appeared imminent, Russia declared war on that nation. In a statement handed to the Japanese Ambassador and published in the Soviet Press on August 8, 1945, Foreign Minister Molotov declared:

Taking into consideration the refusal of Japan to surrender, the Allies approached the Soviet Government with a proposal to join the war against Japanese aggression . . . . Faithful to its obligations to its Allies, the Soviet Government accepted the proposal of the Allies and adhered to the statement of the Allied Powers of July 26, 1945 . . . (Potsdam Proclamation). As of 9 August, the Soviet Union will consider it is in a state of war with Japan.<sup>16</sup>

That, declaring war against Japan, the Soviet Union also agreed to adhere to the terms of the Cairo Declaration is a matter of history. Most significant is the fact that the remaining Allied Powers have not yet agreed to the restoration of Formosa to the Republic of China.

Although the Instrument of Surrender, signed on September 2, 1945, did not specifically refer to Formosa, it stipulated complete compliance with the provisions of the Potsdam Proclamation. Accordingly, the Japanese forces on the island surrendered to the Nationalist Government which assumed administrative control of the government. Although Japan did not formally transfer title to China, it no longer exercised any control over the territory.

The Japanese acceptance of the Instrument of Surrender, though it relieved Japan of de facto control of Formosa, did not transfer title of the

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<sup>16</sup>Morello, p. 18.



territory to China. Sovereignty in law remained with Japan until it formally renounced title to the island in 1952. The Japanese renunciation has further complicated the issue. In addition to the claims of Communist China, the position of the Nationalist Government has also been challenged by the native Formosans. They claim the Cairo Declaration is not valid, as it violates the Atlantic Charter. The basis for the violation is the fact the Declaration handed Formosa to China without the consent of the Formosan people.<sup>17</sup> This argument appears questionable since as noted earlier the Cairo Declaration did not transfer title of the island from Japan to China. They also claim that the predominantly Chinese ethnic origin of the population does not necessarily make them Chinese and that long political separation from China and misrule by the Chinese authorities have given them the right to self-determination. Since they consider the present status of Formosa as undetermined, they have asked for complete independence in accordance with the principle and practice of self-determination under the provisions of Article I of the United Nations Charter which states as one of its purposes: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples." Pursuing this argument, the spokesmen for independence petitioned the United Nations to intervene in their behalf.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Li Thian-hok, "The China Impasse," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVI (April, 1958), 447.

<sup>18</sup>Chen I-te, "Formosa's Independence," *New York Times*, December 24, 1964, p. 26.





Prior to departing from the United Nations the Republic of China refused to discuss the issue on the grounds that the problem is an internal matter. As such, intervention by third parties would be a direct violation of Section 7, Article 2, of the United Nations Charter which states in part:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

However, the withdrawal of the Republic of China from the United Nations casts doubt on the practicality of the above argument.

In concluding the question of legality of claims to Formosa, the Republic of China contends that the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation are "legal and binding upon the signatories."<sup>19</sup> They are adamant in their opinion that title to Formosa has passed to China and the island is an integral part of Chinese territory. In support of his Government's position on the subject, President Chiang Kai-shek declared:

Therefore, when Japan surrendered, the Government of the Republic of China repossessed Taiwan (Formosa) and Penghu (Pescadores) and constituted them as Taiwan Province. Since that time, Taiwan and Penghu have regained their status as an integral unit of the territory of the Republic of China.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Republic of China News Conference, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, October 16, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, "President Chiang Reviews World Situation," *China News Service*, February 15, 1955, p. 3.



The Formosans contend that the Nationalist Government forfeited its right to represent China when it failed to defeat the Chinese Communists on the mainland. Pursuing this line of argument they have questioned the right of Chiang Kai-shek to establish the seat of his government on the island.<sup>21</sup> However, it might be argued that the continuous exercise of governmental authority and occupation of Formosa for over twenty years has established possession of Formosa by the Nationalist Government by an assertion of right.

In August, 1945 when Chiang Kai-shek accepted the Japanese surrender of Taiwan an "Administrator General and Concurrent Supreme Commander in the Taiwan Area" was established. This action virtually restored to Chiang the territory pledged in the Cairo Declaration, at least for de facto rule. De jure adherence by Japan through formal renunciation of all claims came with the general peace treaty of September, 1951 and a separate bilateral treaty concluded with the Republic of China in April, 1952. However, no de jure sovereignty was thereby awarded to the Republic of China, since no beneficiary was named to receive what Japan had renounced. Failure to resolve this legal dilemma twenty years ago continues to haunt those who argue today that the case of the legitimacy of Nationalist Chinese rule on Formosa is closed.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Morello, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup>Allen S. Whiting, "Morality, Taiwan, and U.S. Policy," in Jerome A. Cohen, *Taiwan and American Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 83.



#### IV

### POST WAR NATIONALISM

The initial reaction to Chinese control following Japan's surrender indicated the decision at Cairo had been well-founded. Even active Formosan Nationalists admit today that on the whole the Taiwanese people originally welcomed the Nationalist administration.<sup>23</sup> "If we had been given a vote in 1945, we probably would have approved Chinese rule," said Dr. Thomas Liao in 1963. Other Formosans, too, admit to their "glorified image of China and the Chinese."<sup>24</sup> It was only after the Nationalist government proved itself objectionable on Formosa that the native islanders arose in revolt.

The first soldiers arriving were illiterate, undisciplined, and treated the Formosans as an occupied people.<sup>25</sup> Their leader and governor was General Chen Yi, former governor of Fukien province, who soon surrounded himself with other mainland officers who acted as commissioners to control the island economy. These mainland leaders governed Formosa as an occupied territory, not as a liberated Chinese province. They resented the local population, partly because it had prospered under Japanese rule, and tended to regard the Formosans, who had adopted the customs and culture of Japan, more as enemies than fellow countrymen.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>William M. Bueler, *U. S. China Policy and the Problem of Taiwan* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1971), p. 104.

<sup>24</sup>Mendel, p. 27.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 28.



Following the first group of mainlanders came their friends and relatives, followed by "waves of coolies brought from the diseased and illiterate masses of Shanghai slums . . . bubonic plague and cholera appeared on Formosa in 1946 for the first time in thirty years."<sup>27</sup>

General Chen Yi and his associates lost no time in beginning to reorganize the Japanese enterprises into a system of officially operated monopolies. It is estimated that at least 90 percent of all economic enterprises on the island were thus brought under government control.<sup>28</sup> The economic collapse of Formosa was the most serious consequence of the first eighteen months of Chinese rule. Where widespread corruption had been unfamiliar, it now ranged from thievery of private homes to looting of factories, and massive diversion of Formosan goods and left-over Japanese supplies back to the mainland black market.

Three announcements made by the Government in 1946 arousing bitter resentment were: (1) a decision prohibiting local self-government by Formosans until 1949 (two years later than the mainland provinces); (2) an announcement that former Japanese-owned real estate would be sold at auction to favored mainlanders; and (3) the placing of all external trade and most production in the hands of a few mainland officials.

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<sup>27</sup>George H. Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 206.

<sup>28</sup>Ballantine, p. 59.





Perhaps in these circumstances, it was natural that the Formosans should be disposed to magnify the responsibility of Chinese officials for the deplorable economic plight of the island and to overlook the effects of allied bombings and the wartime neglect of the island's civilian economy by Japan. In addition, the repatriation of 300,000 Japanese included many skilled technicians. Nevertheless, such was the background of the violent clash which took place in the second year of the Chinese occupation.

On the evening of February 27, 1947, Chinese agents of the Tobacco Monopoly walked through a crowded Taipei park and seized an elderly woman vendor selling unlicensed cigarettes. When those nearby came to her defense, several shots were fired, setting off riots and a general attack on the occupation authorities by the Formosans, both in Taipei and elsewhere on the island.<sup>29</sup> Martial law was declared. A Settlement Committee was formed by the Formosans, and General Chen Yi, who then lacked the necessary military forces to cope with a revolt, adopted a temporizing attitude and accepted in principle to initiate a series of political and economic reforms.

However, Chen Yi had secretly communicated with Nanking and requested Chiang Kai-shek to send troops to Taiwan to strengthen his hand.<sup>30</sup> The Formosan Settlement Committee submitted their reform proposals on March 7, 1947, and on March 8 the committee was assured the "demands for

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<sup>29</sup>Kerr, p. 254.

<sup>30</sup>Bueler, p. 104.



political reforms in this province are very proper. The Central Government will not take any military actions against Taiwan . . . "31 That same evening troops of the Chinese 21st Division, Shanghai, landed to quell the uprising. 32 They carried American and Japanese equipment as they began a month-long retaliatory massacre. The Formosan Settlement Committee was disbanded and the Government forces rounded up all Formosans suspected of having been involved in the revolt, including a substantial proportion of the Taiwanese intellectuals and elite. Estimates of the total number of Formosans killed in 1947 range from 10,000 to 20,000 if one counts prisoners presumed dead and those disappeared. 33

Many Formosans today claim that these events were the catalyst in causing the Taiwanese activists to move from the advocacy of reform of the Chiang Kai-shek government to advocacy of Formosan independence.

After order had been restored the Chinese Defense Minister was sent from Nanking to investigate the uprising and reported "the revolt was due to the instigation of Communists, the training of the Japanese, and the ambitions of the Formosan politicians. "34 Similar statements were made by writers

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<sup>31</sup>Kerr, p. 291.

<sup>32</sup>H. Maclear Bate, *Report on Formosa* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1952), p. 275.

<sup>33</sup>Kerr, p. 310.

<sup>34</sup>Mendel, p. 38.



in this country; W. G. Goddard, writing in 1966 blamed the Japanese and Formosan politicians as much as General Chen Yi.<sup>35</sup>

After receiving a report from the United States Ambassador at Nanking concerning the deplorable state of affairs in Formosa, the Generalissimo relieved General Chen Yi of his post and transferred him to the favored position of governor of Chiang's own home province of Chekiang. In fact, Chen Yi was not punished until he was discovered to be in contact later with the Communists on the mainland, presumably with intentions of dealing with them.<sup>36</sup> He was condemned by Chiang Kai-shek in mid-1950 and executed for his crimes in Taiwan from 1945-1947. This belated execution did not convince the Formosans that it was for any misdeeds committed on Taiwan. They were quite skeptical, noting that Chen Yi had been rewarded quite handsomely by Chiang and that he had been arrested only when it was discovered that he was about to betray his friend and patron, the Generalissimo.

By mid-1948 it was evident that the Nationalists would be swept out of North China.<sup>37</sup> Chiang soon lost the great postwar advantages given him with United States logistics and moral support, by insisting on holding walled cities while the Communists controlled the countryside and soon isolated his positions. In December, 1949, the Nationalist government withdrew to

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<sup>35</sup>W. G. Goddard, *Formosa--A Study in Chinese History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), p. 177.

<sup>36</sup>Kerr, pp. 367-396.

<sup>37</sup>Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), pp. 651-678.



Formosa with the remnant of its armed forces and loyal mainland supporters. As a result, the fortunes and future status of the Formosan people remained until today inextricably enmeshed with the foreign policy of the United States and China, as well as the foreign and internal policy of their own country.

The initial policy of the United States was that Taiwan belonged to China, and stressing the determination of avoiding embroilment in Chinese internal affairs, President Truman announced on January 5, 1950:

. . . The United States will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military aid to the Chinese forces on Formosa. In the view of the United States Government, the resources on Formosa are adequate to enable them to obtain the items which they consider necessary for the defense of the island . . . . 38

President Truman's policy statement plunged Formosan leaders into despair. For the second time since Japan's surrender, the United States let pass an opportunity to perhaps intervene on behalf of the Formosan people. Following the President's speech, Secretary of State Acheson made an address which defined a defense perimeter for American interests in the Western Pacific that excluded Korea and Taiwan.

The President's statement was bitterly attacked by the Republican opposition in Congress. Senator Taft said that the rejection of the idea of

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<sup>38</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Hands Off Speech on Formosa," *United States Department of State Bulletin*, XXII (January 15, 1950), p. 79.





American armed forces stopping the advance of Communism in the Far East was inconsistent with that which the United States had agreed to do in Europe.<sup>39</sup> Senator Vandenburg observed that "The rights of the Formosan people themselves must be consulted . . ."

In New York the Soviet Union moved to expel the Nationalist Chinese from the United Nations, but China's delegate was at that moment chairman of the Security Council, and the Russian motion was defeated. The Russians subsequently walked out of the Council on January 11, 1950.

The United States' position did not waver publicly from its view that Formosa belonged to China until June 27, 1950, two days after the North Korean Communist forces attacked the Republic of Korea. At this time, President Truman issued a statement which heralded a significant shift in American policy:

. . . In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area . . . Accordingly, I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa . . . .<sup>40</sup>

The following day Chou En-lai made the Communist Chinese position clear with the following immediate reaction to Truman's statement:

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<sup>39</sup>Robert A. Taft, "Statement on Formosa," *United States Congressional Record*, daily ed. (January 5, 1950), p. 93.

<sup>40</sup>Harry S. Truman, "Formosan Policy Statement," *United States Department of State Bulletin*, XXIII (July 3, 1950), p. 5.



I declare that Truman's statement of June 27 and the action of the American Navy constitute armed aggression against the territory of China. I declare that . . . the fact that Taiwan is part of China will remain unchanged forever.<sup>41</sup>

President Truman's action amounted to a moratorium on Formosa, but did not explicitly recognize the Chiang regime's sovereignty over the island; nor did he accept Chiang's offer on June 29, 1950, of 33,000 troops to help in Korea.<sup>42</sup> By February, 1951 (three months after the Chinese Communists intervened in Korea), substantial United States military aid was arriving in Taiwan.

Throughout the Korean Conflict the position of the United States became more firm, and in May of 1951, Dean Rusk, then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs stated: "We recognize the National Government of the Republic of China even though the territory under its control is severely restricted. We believe it more authentically represents the views of the great body of the people of China . . ."<sup>43</sup> This statement was interpreted by many as the equivalent of an announcement that the United States was unqualifiedly supporting the National Government of China.

The promotion of independence for Taiwan during this time frame would have been difficult for the United States. It would have to have been

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<sup>41</sup>Chou En-lai, *Oppose U. S. Occupation of Taiwan* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1958), p. 5.

<sup>42</sup>Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969), p. 536.

<sup>43</sup>Dean Rusk, "Speech on U. S. Recognition of the National Government of the Republic of China," *United States Department of State Bulletin*, XXIV (May 28, 1951), p. 746.



pursued in the face of stubborn opposition from the Chinese Communists, from Chiang's supporters in the United States and probably would have required the forcible elimination of the Chiang government.

The question of the status of the off-shore islands became an acute problem for the United States in 1954, when the Chinese Communists bombarded Quemoy Island followed by an amphibious assault and the fall of Ichiang Island on January 18, 1955. During this period a mutual defense treaty was signed between the United States and the Republic of China (December 2, 1954) that is still in effect today. This treaty was described at the time as an integral part of our defense strategy based on the "island chain in the Western Pacific." It will present one of the primary problems the United States must encounter in scaling down or dissolving our military commitment to Taiwan, should we so choose.

In October, 1958, after a three-day conference with United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on the off-shore islands crisis, Chiang Kai-shek renounced the use of force for the recovery of the mainland. In June, 1962, in order to allay mounting tension in the Taiwan straits, President John F. Kennedy stressed United States opposition to the use of force by both Communists and Nationalists.

During the 1950-60 period the U. S. economic and military aid continued to increase, finally reaching 3 billion dollars in economic and over 2 billion dollars in military assistance.<sup>44</sup> Even today, critics of the

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<sup>44</sup> Sheppard Glass, "Some Aspects of Formosa's Economic Growth," in Mark Mancall, ed., *Formosa Today* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 84.





National Government contend that the military expenditures and buildup go far beyond that needed for defense alone. Formosa has the unenviable distinction of having proportionally more people under arms than any other country.

Today, 90 per cent of the 400,000 ground troops are Formosan (Fox Butterfield writing for the New York Times, 12 October 1969, reported that the highest Formosan officer in the armed forces was a major and that only 86 of 14,000 majors are Formosan). However they may feel about Chiang's vows to "re-conquer the mainland," the military will certainly oppose any Chinese Communist attack. There is no incentive on their part to change one mainland rule for another.

During the Kennedy-Nixon presidential campaign of 1960, Senator Kennedy questioned the wisdom of the United States position of supporting Chiang's retention of the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. However, when accused by Nixon and others of "softness" toward Communist China, he drew back from advocacy of any offshore island disengagement.<sup>45</sup> Throughout the 1960's, the role of the Formosan people remained unchanged within their own country, while the admission of Communist China to the world community moved closer. Finally, in late 1971 the Peoples Republic of China was seated in the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations, replacing the Republic of China. This was followed in early 1972 with increased contact and communications between Communist China and the United States, culminating in President Nixon's visit to Peking in February and Taipei's subsequent

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<sup>45</sup>Mendel, p. 175.





break with Tokyo on September 29, 1972.

Following these international developments, the prospect of Formosan independence seems to have improved in the eyes of the Taiwanese in exile in Japan and this country.<sup>46</sup> Before further examining this prospect, I would like first to briefly discuss the existing government structure and leadership on the Island: Taipei has been the "temporary" capital since the Communist victory on the mainland in 1949. Chiang and his ruling party, the Kuomintang (KMT) maintain they are upholding the traditions of Sun Yat-sen and the Revolution of 1911 which overthrew the last Chinese dynasty and established the Republic. Since Sun's death in 1925, Chiang has headed the KMT and except for a few months, has continuously served as head of the government. The organizational structure of the Kuomintang, also known as the Nationalist Party, is similar to that of Communist parties. This is not really surprising since Sun Yat-sen modelled the KMT on the Russian Communist Party.

Elected as the Republic of China's first President under the new constitution of 1947, Chiang resigned in 1949 as his mainland government was collapsing, but he resumed the presidency on Taiwan in 1950. When the seat of the government of the Republic of China was moved to Taiwan, much of the government apparatus, designed to rule all of China, was focused upon the island. Members of the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan (branch)

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<sup>46</sup>Peter R. Kann, "Embattled Island," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 24, 1971, p. 8.



who had been elected on the mainland in 1947 and 1948 ruled Taiwan, the only area remaining under their jurisdiction. Less than five per cent of the government officials were native Taiwanese. When the legislators' terms were due to expire in the early 1950's, their powers were extended indefinitely pending the liberation of the mainland.<sup>47</sup>

Chiang was reelected President by remnants of the National Assembly when his six-year term was completed in 1954. In spite of his insistence that no changes should be made in the 1947 constitution pending the recovery of the mainland, alterations were made in the "temporary provisions" of the constitution to allow Chiang to be reelected beyond two terms in 1960. In February, 1972, he announced he would again run for office and was elected without opposition for his fifth term.

While maintaining complete control of national and international affairs, the government promoted the establishment of a Taiwan Provincial Assembly in 1959. Although the provincial governor continues to be appointed by the national government, the Assembly is popularly elected and has broad domestic powers. Many Formosan city and county officials are also elected in highly contested elections. Independent candidates are often elected as mayors of the major cities. Martial law remains in partial effect, and elective officials dare not challenge certain national goals such as the "return to the mainland."

The national government which wishes to maintain the image and some of the substance of constitutional government, has been faced with a high

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<sup>47</sup>Plummer, p. 171.



attrition of its elected officials. In 1972 after a freeze in office of more than 25 years, membership in all elected bodies had been greatly reduced and less than a majority of the original members (appointed in 1947) remained. To check this trend, national elections were held December 23, 1972, in Taiwan, the only "liberated area."

Although there is no specific statute to exclude Formosan citizens and their representatives from the overall fictional government of China, this has in effect been the past policy. However, in 1972, a large majority of the National Assembly and Legislators elected were Formosans. This increase in representation has encouraged the native islanders but still leaves them with less than a 20 per cent representation. The election did not affect incumbent legislators who are to hold their seats until a "return to the mainland" brings their constituencies back under National control. Newly elected holders of office will have to stand for re-election on a regular basis. Despite the small proportion of overall representation, there has been an explicit effort to increase Formosan participation in the political system.<sup>48</sup> In the 1972 elections, voter turnout was encouraged and nearly 7.5 million or over 70 per cent participated. For the first time, open criticism of the Chiang regime by some of the candidates--tolerated by the government--was wholly unprecedented.

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<sup>48</sup> J. Bruce Jacobs, "Taiwan 1972: Political Season," *Asian Survey*, XIII (January, 1973), pp. 103-112.



Legislation and attrition have also improved the position of the Formosans in areas such as the civil service. In the early 1950's only about half of those taking examinations were native Formosans, but in the last two years the figure has risen to approximately 92 per cent, with over 90 per cent passing.<sup>49</sup>

In other functions of civil government such as public health, welfare, the police system, transportation and agriculture, the Formosans have dominated the majority of the lower and middle levels of management, but still achieve little representation in the higher executive positions.

A similar pattern exists in the school system, with the senior teachers and principals of the middle and elementary schools remaining mainlanders, as is the case for virtually all university professors (with the notable exception of medicine).<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the mainlanders in better governmental and official positions, the Formosans control most of the better paying jobs in the private sector, and make up nearly all of the middle class merchants and agricultural workers.

While mainlanders dominate the political system, explicit and not insignificant steps are being taken to increase Formosan participation. Changes in the status of Chiang Ching-kuo, eldest son of President Chiang

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<sup>49</sup>J. Bruce Jacobs, "Recent Leadership and Political Trends in Taiwan," *The China Quarterly*, IVL (January/March, 1971), pp. 129-154.

<sup>50</sup>Meisner, p. 156.





Kai-shek, give further indications of his preparation for eventual supreme leadership. Now age 62, Ching-kuo has served his apprenticeship as head of the Youth Corps, the Veterans Bureau, the security agencies, Minister of National Defense and Vice Premier.

In June of 1972, Ching-kuo was appointed Premier and his old post of Vice Premier was allocated to a Taiwanese. In addition, three more Taiwanese were appointed to high level Government positions previously held by mainlanders. If President Chiang should step aside, Vice President Yen Chia-kan could become President, but because the constitution is vague, the premiership could become more powerful and the presidency more ceremonial.<sup>51</sup>

In 1925, Ching-kuo traveled to the Soviet Union for study, apparently with his father's blessing. He attended Moscow's Sun Yat-sen University and various political and military schools and, apparently against his father's will, he remained in Russia for 13 years, marrying a Russian. He later emerged in Taiwan as a tough and shrewd administrator. He shows proper deference to his elders, and is popular with the soldiers, as well as flexible in dealing with the Taiwanese majority.<sup>52</sup>

Arrests and convictions for political offenses have continued, and are common occurrences. Chen Yu-hsi, a former student at the University of Hawaii, received a seven-year prison sentence for reading Communist

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<sup>51</sup>Mark A. Plummer, "Taiwan: Toward a Second Generation of Mainland Rule," *Asian Survey* X (January, 1970), pp. 18-24.

<sup>52</sup>Jonathan Unger, "Heritage in Dispute," *Far Eastern Economic Review* VI (February 6, 1971), pp. 18-19.



material as part of his school work while in Hawaii.<sup>53</sup> Soon afterwards, a 32 year old Formosan doctor who had been conducting research in Japan was given a 15-year sentence for allegedly being a Formosan independence leader.<sup>54</sup> It is understandable that there is no effectively organized Formosan independence movement on Taiwan. It is centered in Japan and the United States with offices in Canada and France. Supporting the movement abroad makes it impossible for a Formosan to return home in safety. Of the many Formosan students that study abroad, few have any intentions of returning. In all, a large per cent of the students who come to the United States remain permanently.<sup>55</sup>

The first overseas organization for Formosans was in Hong Kong in 1948, formed by Joshua Liao who with his brother, Thomas, fled the 1947 massacre discussed earlier in this study. Thomas Liao (Liao Wen-i) created the Formosan Independency Party upon his 1950 arrival in Tokyo. He remained the exiled leader until 1965, when he defected back to the Chiang government and received amnesty. The present leader of the Formosan independence movement is Professor Peng Ming-min.

In September, 1964, Peng was chairman of the Political Science Department at the National Taiwan University. The previous year Chiang Kai-shek had honored him as one of ten "outstanding young people," and in 1961 he

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<sup>53</sup>*Newsletter of the Association for Asian Studies*, XIV (February, 1969), p. 60.

<sup>54</sup>Jacobs, p. 151.

<sup>55</sup>Mendel, p. 50.



served at the United Nations as a member of the Chinese delegation, a unique opportunity for a Taiwanese. In 1964 Peng and two assistants composed a "Declaration of Taiwanese Independence" and in the process of printing it were arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison.<sup>56</sup> After admitting his "wrongdoings" he was released after thirteen months, and placed under close surveillance. Despite this he escaped the island to Sweden and later the United States and is now teaching at the University of Michigan.

Peng has developed into the most promising and respected Formosan political leader of the post-war era. If he can survive the end of the Republic of China's rule on Taiwan, he stands an excellent chance of becoming a future leader of Formosa.

Recent activities of the independence movement have included the merger of five of the world-wide organizations into one "World United Formosans for Independence," headquartered in the United States.

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<sup>56</sup> Peng Ming-min, *A Taste of Freedom: Memoirs of a Formosan Independence Leader* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 136.



## FORMOSA'S FUTURE

What of the future of Formosa and the ultimate destiny of over 14 million people? What role or responsibility does the United States have in this issue? The question that arises here is that of our moral obligation to the Formosans, if any. Or, what should our responsibility be, professing adherence to the principle of self-determination of peoples, while at the same time defending under treaty a government denying much of this self-determination; a government we have economically and militarily supported for over twenty years. In addition, the resentment toward our Vietnam intervention (also in the cause of self-determination) has combined with other factors to put this country in a mood for pulling back, not increasing, our commitments on a distant Asian island.

Robert Scalapino aptly described Formosa as a living symbol of the great American dilemma. Put in simple and straightforward terms, that dilemma is how to fulfill the awesome responsibilities of being a global power, entrusted with the defense of many societies, and at the same time, remain faithful to the principles that constitute our political-ethical creed.<sup>57</sup>

In President Nixon's State of the World message of February 9, 1972, he announced: "The ultimate relationship between Taiwan and the mainland is

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<sup>57</sup>Kerr, p. ix.





not a matter for the United States to decide . . . ." In the joint Shanghai communique' of February 27, 1972, he stated:

The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U. S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.

Unfortunately, the question of what we should do about the native Formosan and his future holds very low priority compared to questions of United States relations with Communist China or the Chinese Nationalist Government. To better view possible courses of action for solving this problem I would like to examine some of the available alternatives.

First, what of the defense treaty between the United States and the Nationalists? This treaty has defended Taiwan and the off-shore islands against aggression for nineteen years. During this time Taipei has been equipped with an impressive array of defensive weapons and training. Thus, it could be contended that the purposes of the 1954 accord have been met, in that the defense of the Republic of China for this period has more than given them time to prepare themselves against a Communist attack.

Most of the 8,800 American forces on Taiwan are personnel who were involved in support of the Vietnam war. They will be reduced as the peace is firmly secured, leaving the 400 military personnel assigned to the Taiwan Defense Command and the Military Assistance Advisory Group.



These are also being reduced in number.

It might appear to be the formal position of the People's Republic of China that all American forces must be withdrawn from Taiwan before more normal relations between Washington and Peking can really take place. Peking, however, doesn't appear to be demanding formal abrogation of America's defense treaty with Taiwan. Premier Chou told James Reston of The New York Times that when all U. S. troops leave Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits area, "then as a matter of course, the so-called U. S. -Chiang mutual-defense treaty, which we had all along considered to be illegal, would become invalid."<sup>58</sup>

What are other alternatives to the China-Formosa scenario? Some writers, including the late Edgar Snow, have proposed that Chiang's son, Ching-kuo, might negotiate to turn Formosa over to the mainland Communists rather than see it evolve as an independent nation under Formosan rule.<sup>59</sup> Premier Chou En-lai has publicly renounced the use of force against Taiwan, saying that there are other ways of solving the problem. This implies negotiations with the Kuomintang government. However, while Chiang lives, there will probably be no deal with China. This was clearly evident in his October 26, 1971, message to "my fellow countrymen at home and abroad." He spoke of the treachery of that "den of iniquity" the United Nations, the strength of the

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<sup>58</sup>Kann, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*



Nationalist bastion of Taiwan, the failures of the "Mao Tse-tung bandit regime," and then pledged that "we (shall) cross over to the other shore, liberate our compatriots and recover our lost mainland."<sup>60</sup>

Another more radical alternative has been suggested by other writers: If Taiwan and the defense treaty were abandoned by the United States, it still might obtain protection from another quarter, the Soviet Union. Though never mentioned publicly by any of the governments involved, this possibility may well be playing a role in their policy deliberations. G. F. Hudson, former Director of Far Eastern Studies, Oxford, suggests that with the death of Chiang Kai-shek, his son is in a good position to take Taiwan along a new road should President Nixon deem it expedient to rid himself of America's commitment. A price would have to be paid for Soviet protection, of course, but rather than curbing Taiwan's flourishing capitalist economy, it would be primarily strategic. As long as the USSR aspires to be a great world naval power and remains at odds with the People's Republic, the use of sea and air bases on an island approximately halfway between Vladivostok and Singapore and 100 miles from the coast of South China would certainly be an attractive proposition. Conversely, it would threaten Peking far more than the U. S. presence in the area, for it would complete the encirclement of China by a power that already presses on her land borders to the north and west--a power that shows no sign of adopting in Asia the "low profile" policy to which the U. S. is now committed.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> William Glenn, "What now Generalissimo?," *Far Eastern Economic Review* XLII (November 13, 1971), pp. 18-20.

<sup>61</sup> G. F. Hudson, "Taiwan's Radical Alternative," *New Leader*, LIV (September 20, 1971), p. 11.



It may be that Peking could reach an understanding with Moscow that would exclude any future Russian support for Taipei, but only at a price that the present Communist Chinese leadership would be unwilling to pay. As matters stand now, the continuing tension between the People's Republic and the Soviet Union makes Taiwan's position stronger than may appear at first sight.





## VI

### CONCLUSIONS

After examining some of the alternatives for a solution to the Formosan dilemma, I would like to conclude with an additional one directed at an ultimate settlement in which the people are fully and effectively represented.

It would appear more plausible at this time for the Nationalist Government to reach an amiable accord with the Formosan majority and increase their participation in a continuing effort toward further political representation. This would avoid an internal split which neither group can hardly afford, and unite the country against further pressure from a Mainland China unification effort.

No one can speak with certainty about what is in the minds of the Formosans. The politically repressive Chiang regime has not until recently permitted them to speak their minds. But, as best one can judge, the vast majority appear to yearn for a Taiwan separate from China and a government they themselves control. The increase in political participation by the younger Formosans coupled with the passing of the older mainlanders appears to be providing a stage where the native Formosans will more and more perform their active role in government and self-determination.

Most Asian scholars in 1973 do not see a readily viable solution to this problem through the United Nations. Professor Urban Whitaker of San Francisco State College who made a detailed study of the United Nations delegates' views states: "The role of the United Nations is likely to be minimal . . . It is unlikely that the UN will take any action on the future of the



Formosan people. "62

It is my contention that this is an extremely crucial time in which we should not abrogate our responsibility to the people of Formosa and completely ignore their aspirations for political identity, or to advocate renunciation of our 1954 mutual defense treaty. Providing that we do not desire to engage in further projection of our own traditions of self-determination, in Asia, we still cannot wash our hands of the matter. John K. Fairbank, Director of the Eastern Asian Research Center at Harvard, has stated that:

. . . Until some successor situation has been worked out among the Chinese parties in some fashion, there is a strong moral argument against our renouncing the mutual security treaty. To do so before that time would undoubtedly produce insecurity, uncertainty, and trouble. The existence of the treaty is a sort of guarantee that the Chinese arrangements concerning Taiwan will not be made by force . . . 63

It is not within the scope of this study of Formosan nationalism to attempt to solve the volatile issue of the future status of relations between the Republic of China and Communist China. Whether there ultimately will be "one China"; "one China, one Formosa"; or "two Chinas" is a problem that must be resolved by the two governments involved, not by a formula written in Washington. In this regard, I do not feel the principles of the 1972 Shanghai communique' are valid. The concept that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China . . . " is wrong. My personal experience in Taiwan leads me to surmise

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<sup>62</sup> Mendel, p. 237.

<sup>63</sup> John K. Fairbank, "Taiwan as a Chinese Problem," *The New Republic* CLXVI (May 13, 1972), p. 16.



that this may well be the view of the two governments involved, but it is not the view of the majority of the Formosan people. Nor can a joint communique' signed by two political leaders foreclose this issue. Professor Edwin O. Reischauer of Harvard has stated that:

The Shanghai communique' has in fact guaranteed the continuation of the status quo for some time, thus further strengthening the separateness of the Taiwanese from China. It may also force the Formosan majority and the mainland minority into a closer union.

Americans should not assume that the Taiwan problem is solved or on the way to solution. 'Autonomy' might serve for a while as a useful fig leaf term to conceal the realities but it is not a solution. Peking and the Taiwanese could never agree on a common interpretation of autonomy.<sup>64</sup>

If the ultimate answer does lie in an independent Formosa, perhaps the orchestration of the recent summit style meetings between Communist China, Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union might provide a vehicle to reduce our military forces and eventually terminate our defense treaty in return for the assurance that non-intervention and sovereignty of Taiwan will be recognized. If the majority of the Formosans do not want this separate political identity, they should have some means to express their will, through a mandate offered by the existing Chiang government or its successor.

A separate Formosa may well elect to negotiate economic and travel agreements with Communist China, resulting in the return of those on Taiwan preferring to join their families on the mainland. In addition, United Nations

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<sup>64</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer, "What the Taiwanese Really Feel," *New York Times*, March 20, 1972, p. 11.



membership should present no great problem if approached from the standpoint of a separate Formosan (or Republic of China) state and not the previous Chiang Kai-shek claim to representation of the mainland.

Finally, I see no reason why the existing Formosan nationalism that has been the basis of this study cannot be the primary catalyst to bring about the realization of a government that truly represents its people in an international community, in which they can find self-respect and their national destiny.





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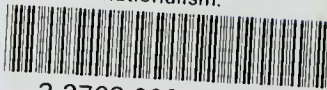
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